

The question of whether existing rules regarding cell phone use in aircraft should be modified is not just an issue of safety. It is also a question of whether the use of cell phones imposes an undue hardship ("externality") on surrounding passengers. The public's experience with cell phones already indicates that cell phone use does impose an unnecessary burden on people surrounding the cell phone user. Examples of discourteous behavior by cell phone users abound in numerous venues, including: trains, subways, buses, meetings, musical concerts, theatrical performances, etc. This discourteous behavior takes different forms, including cell phone users speaking much too loudly while on the phone, and cell phones that ring too loudly.

Most cell phone users are either unaware or insensitive to the discomfort they impose on other people. Taken cumulatively, the costs imposed on other passengers far outweigh the benefits to the individual cell phone users (except, perhaps, in emergency situations).

Unlike other places, there is no "quiet haven" for passengers onboard aircraft to go to escape the noise imposed upon them from cell phone users. The "victims" of the discourteous behavior of cell phone users are not "free to choose" to walk away from the cell phone user.

I note that Amtrak has already recognized the unnecessary and inappropriate burden imposed by cell phone users on other passengers, and has established cell phone free train cars.

I strongly recommend against allowing any modification of current rules that would allow the loosening of restrictions on cell phone use onboard aircraft.